

The Working Adult's Guide to Earning a Counseling & Human Services Master's Degree

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How to find the right online program for your life, goals, and career



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Your Guide to Getting an MS in Counseling & Human Services

Online or on-campus, going back to school for your graduate degree is a big step. It's a smart move to learn everything you can before committing to a master's program to prepare for the best possible future.

That's where this guide comes in. It will help you explore:

- What an MS in Counseling & Human Services can do for your career
- How to fit a graduate degree into your life
- Which degree program is right for you

At Post University, we want to give you the information you need to make the best decision for your future, your career, and your family.

We're with you every step of the way.

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**What can I do with
a Master of Science
in Counseling and
Human Services degree?**



MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH A MASTER'S IN COUNSELING AND HUMAN SERVICES DEGREE.

The fields of counseling and human services both offer rewarding careers in positions that help meet human needs. If you are a person who cares about others and the world around you, this program can offer you the skills you need to make a difference that truly matters. A Master of Science in Counseling and Human Services can take you beyond the basics, preparing you for leadership roles in organizations focused on helping people and improving the quality of life for clients and the world around them.



What does the degree cover?

Students in counseling and human services degree programs dig deep into the way people think and interact with each other. Overall, they study the conditions that affect human functioning—focusing strongly on the ethics, critical thinking, and skills involved in providing effectual help from counseling interventions to planning social programs. They learn how to help people both individually and in group settings through empirically validated counseling methods.

They also study individual differences and multiculturalism to ensure they can understand people from all walks of life and the way their biases, cultures, and backgrounds impact the way they interact with one another. Additionally, they learn to evaluate values and attitudes in order to understand how people will likely respond in a given situation.

The degree also covers practical topics like budgeting, grant writing, funding, and services presentations—the kind of skills necessary to the management of social services organizations and nonprofits. Students learn the practical skills in their education needed to raise funds to keep their organizations and services running well.

What can I do with this degree?

This type of degree can open the door to a number of leadership and direct-care opportunities in the counseling and human services field—from caseworkers and counselors to program coordinators and even social service advocates. There are also corporate opportunities to consider. Graduates with a degree in counseling and human services can become program managers, human resources managers and directors, executive directors, senior human resources managers, and administrators.

What's the difference between human services and social services?

Counseling and human services professionals are often found on either end of the social-helping spectrum. On one hand, many will work in the trenches as licensed counselors to help individuals overcome addictions or resolve issues. They provide individual, group, family, or other empirically validated treatment methods to solve problems. Others, however, will focus on the big picture, planning professional programs that help communities on a larger scale. They'll use their knowledge of human interactions, cultural influences, and the factors that influence human behavior to create programs that will work.

Graduates of social services programs, in comparison, also work in positions where they provide assistance to individuals, families, or groups. They often work on a broader scale to assist in providing resources to those they help as well. They also can assist with community-level issues but often do not work as closely and intensively in providing individualized intervention.

SOURCES

Post University: [Online Master of Science in Counseling and Human Services](#)
USC School of Social Work: [The Difference Between Human Services and Social Work](#)
Study.com: [Master's in Human Services](#)



Opportunities

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, human services positions are on the rise. The need for social and community services managers is expected to increase 9 percent by 2026.

Can I customize my degree to my goals?

A Counseling and Human Services graduate degree typically offers a number of concentrations and electives to help students prepare for specific career goals.



Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Focusing on the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of psychiatric disorders, this concentration provides a deeper understanding of the theories, models, and techniques that work in both individual and group counseling.



Nonprofit Management

Along with the social and cultural forces that make human problems complex, this concentration trains students how to manage people, prepare budgets for nonprofit programs, write grants, and understand the impact of national policies on the work of nonprofits.



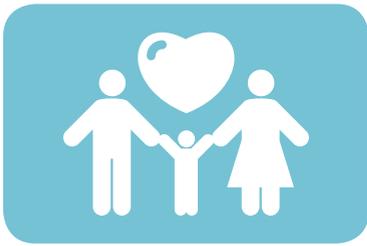
Forensic Mental Health Counseling

Criminals have a unique way of thinking and this concentration looks at the psychopathology behind the criminal mind, preparing students to work within the justice system—including counseling for both adults and juveniles .



Alcohol & Drug Counseling

Students gain an understanding of the complex issues regarding alcohol and drug addiction in society. This concentration focuses on learning the effects of short and long-term use of substances on the individual, family, and community and how to assess, diagnose, and treat those addictions using the latest and best practices.



COUNSELING & HUMAN SERVICES? OR SOCIAL WORK?

Each gives you tools to make a positive difference in your community. The difference is often in perspective and scope.

Defining Differences

Social work concentrates on alleviating the conditions of those in need of help or welfare. Social workers help clients build critical skills and access resources to improve their circumstances.

The field of counseling and human services, although similar, trains professionals to work to improve the quality of life and well-being of individuals, groups, and communities by direct clinical practice, policy development, organizing communities, and outreach. As a result, the field is more difficult to define but full of important opportunities to make a critical impact on the lives of others. Counseling and human services workers are given more intensive training on assisting individual, family, or groups who are facing difficulties and need the help of a well-trained professional. Application may vary based on setting and job title.

Work Environment

Social workers are typically employed on a full-time basis. Although many work standard 9-to-5 hours in central offices, they often meet with clients on evenings or weekends. Others are more ambulatory, meeting clients wherever (and whenever) is most convenient for both parties.

Counseling and human services jobs generally involve full-time hours, although greater flexibility may be available for certain counseling positions. Weekend and evening work is common for substance abuse and mental health counselors especially those employed by inpatient facilities or crisis centers. Additionally, many find jobs working in state, and federal agencies as well as the healthcare sector. It is also common for counseling and human services professionals to work as counselors or caseworkers in private clinics or halfway houses while taking on management roles through nonprofit organizations.

Social workers also work similar hours but tend to be employed in organizations that require after hours and on-call services. Many also choose jobs where they work on community-based projects and initiatives, as opposed to direct counseling services.

Breadth of Work

Arguably, the greatest difference between counseling and human services and social work is the breadth of the profession. Counseling and human services graduates may pursue work in a variety of contexts. Many seek mental health or addiction counseling positions in halfway houses or other facilities. These professionals also play an increasingly important role in the field of geriatrics, with many providing counseling services at senior centers and assisted living facilities. Those who graduate from social work programs typically go on to secure positions as clinical social workers. Many of the positions do overlap and could be obtained by graduates in either profession. A significant subset of counseling & human services professionals work in community outreach, acting as liaisons between clients, organizations, and government entities. These employees write grants, prepare program

budgets, and develop and implement information systems. Additional job opportunities for counseling & human services graduates include:

• Licensed Counselors	• Rehabilitation Counselor
• Substance Use Disorder Counselors	• Vocational Rehabilitation
• Marriage and Family Counselors	• Corrections and Justice System
• Crisis Relief	

Educational Requirements

Success in both counseling and human services and social work cannot be achieved without extensive education and field experience. Although some positions are available for those with their bachelor's degree, the vast majority of jobs require graduate-level education. Beyond that, requirements vary for board certification and clinical experience.

Both counseling and human services and social work programs emphasize field experience. Students apply the knowledge and skills they've gained in the classroom out in the real world. Field practicums and internships are core aspects of a master's program in either subject.

Counseling, and human services professionals are not required to complete as lengthy and time-consuming field experiences as they typically enter the field immediately upon obtaining their degree and continue to work under supervision. This is a major defining difference that many of our students take into consideration as being a better fit for their needs. Professionals who are interested in licensure as a professional counselor or other mental health provider should contact their state's licensing board to determine requirements based on their needs.

Social work is largely a clinical field; to secure employment, social workers must obtain not only requisite educational credentials, but also board certification. Even non-clinical social workers must achieve licensure in most states. With clinical social work, professionals must obtain extensive supervised experience, followed by a board exam. The field placement requirements for social workers are extremely strict and often require MSW students, whether attending full- or part-time, are required to complete several years of field experience. Many programs require students to work full-time during their field experience, which must consist of at least 900 hours, making balancing life responsibilities very challenging.

Job Outlook

The job outlook for the next several years is promising in both counseling & human services and social work. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates 16 percent growth between 2016 and 2026. Counseling positions are also on the rise, with a predicted faster-than-average job growth rate of 13 percent for rehabilitation counselors ... and 23 percent for mental health and substance abuse counselors. By comparison, the job outlook across all industries is just 7 percent growth.

Annual Income

The BLS does not directly collect income information for counseling & human services employees. Ultimately, pay depends on the specialty pursued. For example: many counseling & human services graduates go on to work in mental health counseling, which, according to the BLS, pays median annual wages of \$42,150. Those in social and community management enjoy increased earning potential, with an annual median income of \$64,680 per year.

According to the BLS, social work positions paid a median \$46,890 per year as of 2016. Wages tended to be highest for those working in hospitals and other healthcare facilities.

SOURCES

Bureau of Labor Statistics: [Social Workers](#)

Bureau of Labor Statistics: [Social and Community Services Managers](#)

Bureau of Labor Statistics: [Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors](#)

National Association of Social Workers: [Choose the Social Work Profession](#)

Psychology School Guide: [What is the Difference Between Social Work and Human Services Degrees?](#)

CAREER PATHS AT A GLANCE

While they are similar in goals—both social work and human services are dedicated to improving communities—their career paths can be very different.

Percentage Increase in Open Positions by 2026—BLS

Social workers 16%



Community health workers 16%



Rehabilitation counselors: 13%



Social and community service managers: 18%



Mental health and substance abuse counselors: 23%



Annual Median Wages as of 2016—BLS





Career Paths for Counseling & Human Services Graduates:

Corrections and Justice System



Crisis Relief

Licensed Counselors

 Mental health counseling

Community service management

Substance abuse counseling

Rehabilitation counseling



Nonprofit-based program management



CAREER OUTLOOK FOR MSHSV GRADS

Earning an advanced degree in counseling and human services makes you extremely competitive in today's job market. Because this field has excellent growth potential according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, especially in some sub-sectors that enjoy a growth rate twice that of the average, pursuing an MS can accelerate your advancement and give you access to a huge variety of rewarding career choices.

Management

If you love to lead others, a managerial role in the counseling and human services field may be your ticket to fulfillment. Employment of social and community service managers is projected to grow 18 percent by 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations, likely due to increases in the elderly population and increases in demand for substance abuse treatment and mental health and health-related services. The median annual wage in 2016 was \$64,680.

Community and Social Service Occupations

Employment of community and social service occupations is projected to grow 14 percent over the next decade, adding about 371,900 jobs. The median annual wage for community and social service occupations was \$42,990. Some of the fastest-growing areas of need include:

Marriage and family therapists

Growing 23 percent by 2026 with a current median salary of \$49,170 per year.

School and career counselors

Up 13 percent by 2026. 2016 median annual wage was \$54,560.

Several other areas that will be especially important in coming years include:

Licensed Addiction

(or Substance Abuse)

Counselor (LAC)

Advocacy and public awareness for substance abuse and addiction issues have created a need for more human services in these areas. In addition, courts frequently recommend treatment over prison time, professionals in this field earned an average salary of \$42,150 in 2016, per the BLS.

Licensed Professional

(or Mental Health)

Counselor (LPC)

These counselors evaluate client mental and physical health, providing treatments to help modify behavior and give patients strategies for coping. Similar to an addiction counselor.

The national average for a LPC is: \$65,041

Public Health Educator

If you're passionate about improving the health of individuals and communities, a career as a public health educator is a fulfilling choice. The BLS predicts that overall employment of health educators and community health workers will grow 16 percent in the next decade.

In this capacity, you teach people about behaviors that promote wellness by translating your extensive knowledge of public health issues into highly effective education campaigns. You might specialize in physical, emotional, environmental, or spiritual health issues. Your goal is to help the public take on new behaviors that will help them to restore, promote, and maintain optimal health in these areas. This role involves a good deal of assessment, designing and implementing programs and interventions, and measuring outcomes. The median annual wage for health educators was \$53,070 in 2016.

Nonprofit Sector

Nonprofit organizations offer a wide variety of positions for human services graduates with compensation that is typically comparable with that found in private sector, for-profit companies. In fact, a [BLS study published in 2016 found](#): "Employees at nonprofits are more likely than workers at for-profits to be offered benefits. Eighty-one percent of all workers at nonprofit establishments are offered medical plans by their employers, compared with 67 percent of workers at for-profit establishments." In 2018, salary-checking resources PayScale and Salary.com listed healthy wage averages for the following nonprofit positions:

- Executive Directors – \$73,000
- Program Coordinators – \$43,000
- Grant Writers – \$67,034

Justice System

You'll find human services positions within the justice system at the state and federal levels, as well as regionally and locally. Potential career choices include:

- Probation officers
- Caseworkers
- Juvenile detention workers
- Juvenile court liaisons

The median annual wage for probation officers and correctional treatment specialists was \$50,160 in 2016. The BLS projects the growth rate to be 6 percent by 2026, about as fast as the average for all occupations.

Unlimited Ways to Serve Others

Human services benefits everyone in a community in one way or another, but the overriding goal is to provide extra attention and services to those who need extra help in one form or another. Some areas of specialization that might be especially gratifying include working with:

- Returning soldiers and veterans
- Teen parents
- First Nations and Tribal groups
- Faith-based services and initiatives
- People grieving a loss in need of bereavement counseling
- Immigrants and refugees
- Family violence victims and offenders
- Homeless populations
- Hospice patients and their families

SOURCES

HumanServicesEdu.org: [The Master of Human Services Degree](#)

HumanServicesEdu.org: [The Career of a Case Worker](#)

PayScale.com: [Master of Human Services \(MHS\) Degree Average Salary](#)

Bureau of Labor [Statistics: Should I get a Master's Degree?](#)

Bureau of Labor Statistics: [Home Page](#)

Career In Psychology: [Start a Geriatric Social Worker](#)

Ziprecruiter.com: [Licensed Professional Counselor Salary, December 7, 2018.](#)



SOURCES

- Public Health Online: [What is Health & Human Services?](#)
U.S News & World Report: [Online Human Services Degree - An Overview](#)
Chron.com: [The Pros & Cons of a Career in Social Work](#)
LearningPath.org: [Pros and Cons of a Career in Health and Human Services](#)
Bizfluent: [The Pros & Cons of a Career in Social Work](#)
National Organization for Human Services: [What is Human Services?](#)
Bureau of Labor Statistics: [Social and Community Services Managers](#)
Bureau of Labor Statistics: [Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors](#)
Bureau of Labor Statistics: [Occupational Employment Statistics](#)
Bureau of Labor Statistics: [Social Workers](#)



LOOKING AT THE PROS

While it's rewarding and essential, human services is still a challenging field—even with a Master of Science in Counseling and Human Services. Let's take a closer look at some of the pros.

PROS



An enormous field full of numerous possible professions and functions.

The career field is wide open for a professional with a graduate degree in counseling and human services. Depending on specializations and licensure requirements, they can serve one-on-one as counselors or develop programs that help entire groups of people.



Tailor your interests to your career.

It's possible to develop a concentration in areas you feel especially passionate about. Counseling concentrations in Alcohol and Drug Counseling or in Clinical Mental Health Counseling could prepare you for licensure and counseling positions, helping the elderly, teens, minorities, the incarcerated, or people with intellectual disabilities. Other concentrations, such as one in nonprofit management, can prepare you for leadership positions in social work.



Bring all of your best traits and skills to work with you.

Your enduring desire to help others paired with your patient, understanding, and caring temperament can let you shine in this area, especially if you're preparing for a counseling role. In nonprofit management or even in a corporate role, your strong sense of responsibility, ability to find adequate resources, and knack for cutting through red tape to get your clients the help they need are assets that make you invaluable to employers. You're a clear and effective communicator.



Make a big impact on a micro level.

If working on a small scale to benefit your own community is important to you, there are hundreds of ways to get involved and bring your unique vision to fruition locally—whether that's as part of a social program or providing counseling services at a neighborhood halfway house.



You get to see people turn their lives around.

"If you have a true calling for this, your life will be enriched on a spiritual level," says Davis, Licensed Professional Counselor. "You will see clients wake from depression, complete their goals, repair their relationships, heal the inner wounds of trauma and more . . . To bear witness to their pain and their progress is nothing short of that."



100 percent online counseling and human services master's degree programs.

A totally online program provides a high amount of flexibility for adult students who are currently also working professionals. "Web-based programs typically follow the same rigorous curricula as brick-and-mortar options," notes *U.S. News & World Report*. The online format is also a great fit for students with children and other family obligations.

**Why Post University
for my Master of
Science in Counseling
and Human Services?**

An Online Program Built with You in Mind!

At Post University, we believe we offer the perfect online MSHSV degree program to meet your needs. But don't just take our word for it, do the research. Here, we'll help you get started with this...

Program Comparison Tool

School/Program	Program Format	Student Support	Financial Assistance	Faculty	Customizable Concentrations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 Online Support • Academic Success Counselor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available to Those Who Qualify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professors with Industry Experience • Committed to Your Success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career-Focused Concentrations
School B					
School C					
School D					

Examples:

Program Format – Online, On-Campus, Blended, Accelerated

Student Support – Online Study Resources, Online Library, Personal Academic Advisor, etc.

Financial Assistance – Personal Financial Aid Advisor, Military Rates, Scholarship Opportunities, etc.

Faculty – Industry-Experienced, Accessible via Email or Chat

You've come this far, now take the next step and enroll in your online MSHSV program at Post University.

Call 800.660.6615 to talk with one of our admissions counselors today!

HOW TO PAY FOR A MSHSV

When it comes to finding the means to pay for a master's program in counseling & human services, there is no "one size fits all" solution. Odds are you'll use several methods. Some grant and scholarship programs have closing dates that are well before the disbursement of funds. Starting early and researching the different ways to pay for your graduate degree gives you the maximum amount of time to prepare and apply.

Your Money or Theirs?

You have two basic choices when it comes to paying for that for a Master's in Counseling and Human Services: Use your money or someone else's. If you planned—in some cases, way ahead—you may already have some of the funds you need. Borrowing money that needs to be repaid is also like using your own funds; you'll need to come up with the cash to pay your lender back after your education is done. When someone else truly pays for your degree, a third party (or several third parties) supply you with funds that don't have to be paid back.

Visit Your Financial Aid Office

Your first stop should be the financial aid office of your chosen institution. They will be able to clearly outline any financial options you have if you qualify and apply for financial aid on your behalf. Any reduction in cost that the institution can offer will directly impact the amount of money you must come up with, so it is well worth the time to apply.

Scholarships & Grants

You may qualify for more scholarships than you realize; there are scholarships not only for individuals in specific industries or who meet academic criteria, but for those that embody the unique spirit of an individual or group. Federal and state grants can help fund a portion of your education; start with FAFSA and work your way through the process to see how much you can acquire for your master's. A few places to search for scholarships and grant opportunities include:

- [American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences](#)
- [Sodexo Foundation](#)
- [American Psychology Foundation](#)
- [National Organization for Human Services](#)
- [Fulbright Foreign Student Program](#)
- [Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship Program](#)
- [Open Society Foundations](#)
- [Institute of International Education](#)
- [International Education and Financial Aid \(IEFA\)](#)

The GI Bill

If you have already served or are considering serving in the military, one of the benefits offered is the ability to pay for school. Even if you used it for your undergraduate degree, you may still have funds available. Explore your options with your local recruitment or VA office to learn how you could fund your master's with military service.

Company-sponsored Education

Some agencies and businesses offer financial assistance for employees who are attending college. If your employer offers this as a benefit, then you could acquire additional funds here. Just make sure you read the fine print and understand what you are offering or agreeing to in return for those corporate dollars. If your company doesn't have a formal program yet, [it could be worth asking about.](#)



Tuition Discounts

While you're checking out fellowships, scholarships, or potential employer partnerships offered by a prospective school, be sure to inquire about any other [special savings](#) you might be eligible for. Ask the graduate program's admissions advisor:

- Do you offer cost savings on books and electronic course materials?
- Am I eligible for discounted tuition based on my military service?
- Do I qualify for a family, alumni, senior citizen, or graduate discount?

Use Your Money or Credit to Finance Your MSHSV

Savings: If you planned ahead, you're a rock star! Use some of that 529 savings plan to fund your graduate degree dreams. If you have some savings, you can use those funds as well; just don't zero out your savings account entirely. Emergencies can and do come up while you are attending school and you may need some backup funding.

Student Loans: If you're like most of us, you'll need to fund at least some of your education with financing—or a student loan. A federal student loan could help you pay for your MSHSV, after you have exhausted your other options. These funds need to be paid back and are made available via the Federal Direct Student Loan Program. There is a maximum limit of \$138,500 for graduate students.



Student Loan Forgiveness

Your career choice may qualify you for the [Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program](#). If you make 120 qualifying monthly payments under a qualifying plan for a qualifying employer, you may be eligible to have your remaining debt forgiven.

- Federal Aid Office of the U. S. Department of Education

SOURCES

Top Degrees Online: [25 Great Scholarships for Human Services Majors](#)

HomeRoom: [How to Qualify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness](#)

SallieMae: [Get Financial Aid for Graduate School](#)

FinAid: [Private Student Loans](#)

BREAKING IT DOWN: WAYS TO PAY

Use Your Money



Your own savings



Money you borrow and repay

Federal and state loans, private loans, and personal loans

Use Someone Else's Money



Grants

Money paid by the federal government or your state for your education



GI Bill

If you've served, you are likely eligible



Scholarships

Merit-based, institutional, or private



Work-Study Program

Places students with demonstrated need in part-time jobs on or off campus





**Should I go
back to school?**



5 Questions to Ask Yourself

It's healthy to consider what your chosen career field has to offer in the years to come. Before deciding on your plan of action, ask yourself:

1. What do I want to do?
2. Where do I see myself in 5, 10, 15 years?
3. What skills and knowledge do I already possess?
4. Where do I lack the skills, background, or credentials I need to meet my career goals?
5. What's the best way to develop new skills or advance existing ones?

The answers will give you a better sense on what direction you want to take your career.



RECHARGE YOUR CAREER

Staying relevant in the workplace is a necessity in any industry. In today's fast-paced professional world, that can be a trick. Here are insights on how education can help you recharge your career—or take it a different direction altogether.

Training Certifications Versus College Degrees

From internal workshops and weekend seminars to one-off courses at local schools, training can help you build the skills necessary to take advantage of immediate opportunities or needs in the marketplace. It teaches you what you need to know now. It's an option best suited for entry-level or intermediate-level positions.

For mid- to late-career professionals looking for advancement or those with minimal formal higher education, a university program is likely a better choice. It's an employer-pleasing credential. And it provides for long-lasting educational change—helping you develop the ability to adapt to and lead change, create new value for an organization, and apply critical thinking skills to future possibilities or problems. Online or on campus, college programs offer the kinds of skills that will serve you for a lifetime.

Speaking of Career Change...

The career many professionals entered 10 to 20 years ago almost certainly has changed over the years. It might not even exist anymore due to technological advances. On the other hand, many of today's fastest growing career fields weren't around 10 to 20 years ago—think social media or SEO consulting.

These advances, specifically in mobile technology, have also freed us from geographical limitations, including working remotely or taking online classes. In fact, with the tremendous improvement in access to quality, flexible higher education through online learning, working adults no longer have to choose between a career and a quality higher education. They can pursue both at the same time.

Show, Don't Tell

As you re-enter the workforce or seek to change careers, your new degree or certificate will be far more valuable to an existing or prospective employer if you can demonstrate how you've been able to apply what you've learned to solve real business challenges. (This is actually a fundamental part of [graduate degree programs at Post University](#) to help adult learners develop the skills and knowledge pertinent to their world today.)

A college education—online or on campus—can also help you expand and develop your network: from LinkedIn to online Meetup groups to networking events to your university network of fellow students, faculty, and alumni.

Lifelong Learning

Keep learning, whether you pursue formal higher education or develop new skills and build on existing ones through less formal means. In the ever-changing job market, it's crucial to stay current with your knowledge and skills to prove your worth in your position and field.

Look for opportunities to expand your knowledge base and don't assume that just because you've done something the same way for years that it's the best way to continue doing it today.

**Excerpts from "[How to Recharge Your Career through Higher Education](#)"*

10 SIGNS

YOU'RE READY FOR ONLINE LEARNING

An online degree program is not for everyone. It requires a special skill set that not everyone can put into practice. Do you have what it takes? The answer is “yes” if...

1

You Can Stick to a Schedule

Creating a monthly calendar with times blocked out for study and assignments, and adhering to it without exception, is the path to scholastic success. Use the calendar on your phone or computer, or keep a poster-sized paper “month at a glance” on your desktop or wall to stay on top of assignments.

2

You're Naturally Organized

If it's just in your DNA to make to-do lists, jot down ideas as they occur to you, keep a notepad beside your bed, and rank tasks in the order of highest priority—you're a natural for online learning.

3

You're Self-Disciplined

Students who log in to classes and discussion forums every day are the most successful. It helps you stay on top of syllabus changes. If you have a hard time saying no to friends and family when they want to hang out with you or bend your ear for an hour, it's time to brush up on your boundary-setting skills.

4

You Don't Procrastinate

Never one to leave an assignment or task until the last minute, you do not work better with a due date breathing down your neck, unlike deadline junkies.

5

You Can Resist Online Temptations

Email, social media, and your favorite news and sports sites—if you can ignore them when you've got more important things to do, you're ahead of the game.

ADULT LEARNERS

Did you know that 85 percent of Americans who are enrolled in a postsecondary institution are classified as a “nontraditional student”? If you’re an adult learner (over 25), a veteran, a senior citizen, working full-time while enrolled, or have dependents other than a spouse or partner—that includes you!

6

You’re Willing to Ask for Help

Whether you’re falling behind in a class or unable to get all of your laundry done on Sunday, you have no trouble reaching out to your instructors or a family member for help.

7

You Maximize Spare Time

If a lunch date keeps you waiting alone at the table for 15 minutes or your dentist is running a half hour behind, you seize every extra moment to study.

8

You Know How to Focus

Reducing distractions enhances your efficiency and accuracy. From absolute silence to certain kinds of music to get into the study zone, knowing exactly what you need for maximum focus is key.

9

You’re Self-Motivated, Self-Directed

No one has to push you to get things done. You have a strong internal motivating system and take great pride in your accomplishments. You’re accountable to yourself and rarely break your commitments.

10

You Value Freedom & Flexibility

If you’ve got a full-time job, a family, and extracurricular commitments that are important to you, earning your degree at your own pace using a schedule that works for you is the ultimate convenience.

A young woman with brown hair pulled back, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a white blazer over a grey top, is sitting on a light-colored couch. She is smiling warmly at the camera. In her hands, she holds a blue clipboard with a white sheet of paper and a gold pencil. A glass of water is visible on a table in the bottom right corner. The background is a light-colored, textured wall.

KEY ONLINE EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR ADULTS

In 2015, 28 percent of all higher education students in the U.S. were taking at least one online course—the 13th consecutive year of growth for distance education enrollments, according to the annual Online Report Card from [Babson Survey Research Group](#).

With so many students going online, it begs the question:

What are the advantages of online education specific to adult learners?

Scheduling Freedom & Flexibility

If you're a parent and you're already working full-time to support your family, there's no room in your week for attending traditional classroom lectures. You might not have the luxury of spending a Saturday afternoon studying in the school library or hanging out with fellow students to collaborate on projects.

Online degree programs usually give you 24/7 access, 365 days a year, to coursework and message boards so you can log on any time of the day or night. You schedule your classes around your life, not the other way around—no need to miss your child's big game or leave work in a tight spot. And if you're a night owl by nature, you can capitalize on this by doing all your coursework when others are sleeping.

Degree Success

The rate of students ages 25 to 29 who earned a bachelor's degree or higher rose from 25 percent in 1995 to 36 percent in 2015, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics ... about the time the internet went mainstream, making online learning possible for adults who can't attend a traditional classroom-based program.

Additionally, because of the flexibility and ease of working on a program around your life, you create more of a personalized and immersive experience learning at your own pace. This increases your ability to both absorb and retain knowledge, another huge advantage of online education.

Affordability

Tuition is normally less costly. Plus, with online learning, you don't incur any additional living or transportation costs. You also don't need to worry about paying for additional childcare, cutting your work hours, or accepting lower pay to attend a classroom-based degree program.

Better Career Prospects

The National Adult Learner Coalition (NALC) estimates that "65 percent of American jobs will require some level of post-secondary education by 2020." Online degree and professional training programs help you learn new skills, improve existing ones, and give you what you need to boost earning potential while succeeding in today's economy. Rapid changes in technology are affecting many industries, and online programs can help you stay current with changes specific to your career field. Many companies require college degrees for managerial roles.

SOURCE: *Post University Insights: Four Key Benefits of Online Education for Adult Learners*

Thank you so much for all of your help and for the great educational experience from Post that helped me reach my career goals! It is greatly appreciated!

Chris Prus, Graduate 2016, Master's in Counseling & Human Service

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